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This was written by Major Richardson  
who edited the few nos of the  
Prescott but Sentinel. It was printed  
The Public Library in Toronto values  
this scarce file at over \$15.00

## **SKETCH**

OF THE

## **LATE BATTLE**

AT

## **THE WIND MILL,**

NEAR PRESCOTT,

IN NOVEMBER, 1839.

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PRINTED AT THE SENTINEL OFFICE,  
PRESCOTT UPPER CANADA.

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JAMES CAMPBELL, PRINTER.

## INTRODUCTION.

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Many Individuals having expressed a wish to see an account of the late sanguinary affair at the Wind Mill, where the Militia and Volunteers of the Country so manfully came forward to support their glorious Constitution, we have been induced to publish a brief statement in Pamphlet form—a part of it is the same as appeared in the Sentinel of the 16th Novr. several important additions and corrections have been made which will add to the interest of the Sketch. Some errors and many omissions will doubtless occur, as invariably will be the case among the different conflicting statements made by persons who were actually in the battle, and upon whom we must rely for much of our information ; as a whole however the account hastily drawn as it is, will be found we believe, as free from errors, as works of a similar nature usually published.

19 January 1809.

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## SKETCH

### *of the late Battle at the Wind Mill*

As we have long predicted would be the case, judging from the conduct of the American Government, and American citizens, during the last two or three years, our town has been invaded by a large body of pirates, murderers and robbers, mostly citizens of the United States, who encouraged by men of property and influence throughout the Union, have dared to land upon British Soil, for the purpose of putting to death every loyal subject of Her Majesty; plundering and destroying their property, and imposing upon the Canadas a licentious Republican Government, which every day's experience more fully shows is wholly unable to restrain Americans within due bounds; altogether inadequate to maintain those principles for which Governments were in the first place instituted—wholly regardless of the laws which, from time immemorial, have regulated the conduct of the subjects of different nations with regard to each other—in fine, to wrest from us the great Magna Charta of British Liberty which is liberty indeed; and to force the inhabitants of these happy Colonies, to accept of a system of Government suited only to the feelings and inclinations of a class of persons whose whole cry is liberty & self government—and whose only controlling power is the will of the lawless rabble.

Floating rumors had been in circulation for several days, that an attack might be shortly expected in this vicinity, as the Brigands were assembling in and about Watertown, Sacket's Harbor, French Creek, and other minor places along the American Frontier; but on Sunday night positive information was obtained that a large number of men had embarked on board of two Schooners, well armed and supplied with ammunition and every necessary implement of warfare and might be looked for in the course of the night. The news was not generally spread in town;—it was known but by a few; in fact, had the story been circulated, so many vague reports and unfounded statements have been made of late, that it would have been scarcely believed;—The news, however, proved too true, on Monday morning about 2 o'clock, some of our inhabitants who were on the alert, discovered two vessels of a very suspicious character, lashed together side by side, approaching the wharf of Messrs Henderson & Co, within a stone's throw; finding however, the wharf torn up; as it is undergoing repairs, the vessels sheered off a little, intending to land at Frazer's wharf, as would appear from their movements; the wind blowing strong down the river at the time, the schooners fell below Frazer's wharf, and passed so near to McMillan's wharf that a man could have jumped ashore. Several persons had now collected near the spot; and the schooners were hailed and required to keep off, or they would be fired into; some evasive answers was given by those on board, and the vessels immediately stood off for the American shore.

We are informed by a person who was present when the schooners came in, that they were not more than half

sailed off, when the word was given that two suspicious vessels were in sight, and owing to the haziness of the night, a sail could be discerned only a short distance, that the first attempt to land was made at Fraser's wharf, although he has no doubt the intention was to effect a landing on the wharf of Hiram Norton, that Col Young, A Jones, Esq. and our informant with 15 or 20 armed men ran down to the bank of the river, that upon being first hailed no reply was made, but that afterwards an answer was given that the vessel was the Charlotte of Toronto, Capt George, that at this time the schooners had fallen down owing to a heavy south wind opposite the yellow Storehouse of Alexr McMillan Esq. where Mr A. Jones and Colonel Young with a few others were standing, that some on board called to Mr J. demanding who he was, to which he replied, I am the Collector for the Port of Prescott, that no one was seen upon the deck but the necessary hands, and that they said they had put in, in distress, that at the time no opposition was made to their landing, as some really supposed, including the Colonel himself, that no harm was intended us, but that the vessels were actually British and loaded with merchandize.

Our informant further says that just as they neared the yellow store, he standing upon Fraser's wharf, discovered that two vessels were lashed together, that he immediately called out to Mr. Jones, stating the fact, and saying he had no doubt, it was the enemy, and that then the Pirates were not ten feet from the wharf, that they threw their rope over the post three times in succession, and that as Providence would have it, it slipped off each time, partly owing to the stiffness of the rope being frozen, and partly to the shortness of the post, which however was sufficiently long for all ordinary purposes; that in order to account for the schooners being lashed together, an answer was made from some one on board, that they had run foul of each other some distance above, and one of them was fast filling with water; that after failing to land at the yellow store, they dropped to Warner's wharf, which is out of repair, and that there one of their Boats was smashed, they then fell below near the Point opposite the Port, where they cast anchor and remained half an hour, that by this time a number of armed men had collected, and upon being requested to send a Boat ashore, they promised to do so, and that within a few minutes after, they hoisted their sails weighed anchor and stood for the American shore. Having no ordnance here, not even one piece, their retreat could not have been prevented.

The small armed Steam boat Experiment, from Brockville, arrived within half an hour after, and took up a position in front of the town. The cowardice of these cut-throat scoundrels alone saved the place; had they landed on Monday morning and marched into our village, there is no doubt they would have succeeded in driving out the inhabitants, and taken possession of Fort Wellington, as there was but a small body of Militia quartered here, and some thirty or forty Volunteers. The overruling hand of a kind Providence, which has been so conspicuous since the first attempt of these unprincipled Barbarians, to carry ruin and devastation.

through the country, was here again signally interposed, and our peaceable inhabitants saved from the hand of those who were pledged by an infernal oath, to spare neither sex, age, or condition who were known to be favourable to British rule.

On Monday morning, at daylight, the two schooners belonging to the American Pirates, were seen anchored in the channel near the centre of the river—they appeared crowded with men, & a constant communication was kept up between the American shore; small boats were seen continually passing and repassing, to and from Ogdensburgh carrying on board provisions, arms, ammunition, &c. We have been told upon good authority, that one or two pieces of cannon were conveyed from Ogdensburgh to the schooners, and there is no doubt can exist in the mind of any candid person that this was the case.

About 9 o'clock on Monday morning, the little *Experiment*, having on board two small pieces of ordnance, being the only cannon that Prescott had to protect herself (there not being one piece of cannon in town) showed some true British play, and was no doubt the only cause that prevented the pirates from landing on our shores on Monday. About 10 o'clock on that day, the American steamer *United States*, came out of Ogdensburgh and fell alongside the *Brigands*, evidently with the intention of rendering them every assistance in her power. This boat has ever been encouraged by the travelling community of the Canadas, and is principally owned in Ogdensburgh; as soon as this was perceived, the *Experiment* gave her a dose of John Bull's powder which had a salutary effect, as the *United States*, although she had a large body of Pirates on board, and a schooner at hand, filled with armed men, still she and the schooner retreated below with the expectation of drawing the *Experiment* into a double fire; but British tars were wide awake to this manoeuvre; the *Experiment* kept her position in front of the town, passing up & down within the compass of a mile. She put two or three shots through the famed *United States*,—sent overboard several of the Patriots (as our neighbours term them) from the Schooners, and sent every American vessel to their own shores, without the loss of a single man killed or wounded.

During this time every one of our townsmen was astonished to see the principal steamer of the *United States*, not only encouraging but doing every thing in her power to aid the Pirates and cut-throats, who were combined together to invade us. This truly sympathising Steamer, having received two or three shots from our little vessel the *Experiment*, abandoned the cause of the Patriots, and subsequently was taken possession of by the U. S. Marshall, with the two Schooners, and conveyed to Sacket's Harbour.

An Express was sent from Ogdensburgh, saying that the Pirates had taken forcible possession of the Steamer *United States* and that the Government of the Republic could not prevent it. Who could believe this—who for one moment, could imagine that two or three hundred men could control a populous town like Ogdensburgh,—the thing was absurd—every thinking man ridiculed the idea, and the only wish of each true British heart was

to bring every rebel, refugee, or falsely styled patriots, to summary justice.

Late on Monday night the Steamers Queen and Coburg arrived, having on board a party of Marines and Regulars amounting in all to about 70 men.

On that night the detachment of the Glengarrys under Capt. McDonald, lay on the ground, and during a heavy rain, with only a blanket covered over them, every moment expecting the approach of the Pirates: their position was near the Fort, and we are aware that most of them marched to the Field of battle on Tuesday morning, without having taken refreshment of any kind since noon on Monday, in fact from the landing of the Americans on Monday morning they had been continually on the alert. The Militia of the County, considering the short notice given turned out admirably, and advanced to the contest with determination and vigour. During the same evening a detachment of men under the command of Lieut. Col Gowan amounting to 140, arrived and early on Tuesday morning, a Battalion of Dundas Militia, one company of which was commanded by Capt D Clark and another by Capt Doran arrived, with two other companies all under the charge of Colonel John Chrysler, and a part of the 1st Grenville Militia, one company of which was commanded by Capt S B Fraser, came up about the same time, having taken a circuitous rout to avoid the enemy's pickets which were stationed above and below the Mill.

Another Company was also on the ground under Cap. Dunham Jones.

On Tuesday morning the following arrangements respecting the battle were made. The left wing, consisting of thirty Marines under Lieutenant Parker, part of Captain G. McDonald's Company of the Glengary Volunteers amounting to 35 men, a portion of the Grenville and Dundas Militia, under command of Lieut Col R D Fraser, took up their line of march along the edge of the woods, where the Brigands had posted their piquets, and drove them in, in gallant style: Captain McDonald led his men into the field, with bravery, and with the Marines and Major Clark's Company were the first that received the fire of the enemy in the ploughed field. Ensign McDonald his brother was slightly wounded.

In the meantime the right wing under the Command of Lieut. Col Gowan, consisting of a detachment of 40 men of the 83d Regt. part of Lieut Col Gowan's Regiment, 60 men under Capt Edmondson, and a number of the Dundas Militia, the whole under the charge of Col. Young proceeded along the bank of the river.

The right wing did not engage with the enemy at all, until after they were driven within the mill and surrounding buildings, the detachment of the 83d Regt. about 40 in number under Lieut Johnson, were all that encountered a sharp fire from the Pirates, they having advanced to within a few rods of the Mill.

Had the right wing pressed forward ten minutes sooner, the retreat of the rebel force would have been completely cut off.

The action on the left wing commenced sharply by the Brigands, who had entrenched themselves behind a stone wall in the



rear of the mill, while the Militia & Volunteers being upon a rise of ground, were exposed to a most galling fire; our men however, advanced in double quick time, loading and firing with the greatest precision. Upon coming near, the second party fled in confusion until they came to another fence, where they again entrenched themselves; from which, however they were again driven by our brave Militia, until they took refuge in the Wind Mill and the surrounding buildings adjacent all of which are built of stone in a substantial manner, particularly the Mill, which is  $3\frac{1}{2}$  feet thick at the bottom and two at the top, of a circular form, about 20 feet high, standing upon a bluff rocky point some thirty feet above the level of the river, and commanding the whole of the surrounding country. Standing in the Mill the spectator can have a view nearly as far as the eye can reach, on every side: the villages of Prescott & Ogdensburgh seem to lie beneath him. & every street and building are distinctly visible, and with the aid of an ordinary spyglass, each movement of the inhabitants, their numbers, &c., can easily be perceived.

This building was the stronghold of the Brigands, and in it were deposited the most of their arms and ammunition, as also the main part of their forces. After being driven in by our men, a continued but irregular fire of musquetry & rifles was kept up by the Bandits, from the Mill, the large stone store, nearly opposite, as also from the small stone house occupied by Mr Mosher, and the two story stone building on the opposite side of the street; most of the injury received by our men was done in this way, with the exception of those who fell in the ploughed field in the rear where the most severe fighting took place. The British forces remained sheltered behind the stone wall and house of Mr Snyder above the Mill, and also behind the house and barn of Mrs Fraser, a little below, until late on Tuesday afternoon, when finding that the Brigands were determined to remain under cover & not come into the open field, they withdrew to Prescott, leaving a strong guard above and below the enemy's position.

We cannot here avoid noticing the unusual degree of excitement among our neighbours & friends across the water & every wharf, and the whole bank from the upper part of Ogdensburgh to Mile Point, so called, (being about that distance below the town) was lined with spectators and sympathisers, who felt so sensible for their fellow Patriots, that they could not restrain themselves, but whenever they supposed any advantage had been obtained by the Pirates, or that our men were falling back in any quarter, rent the air with their cheers, which were distinctly heard upon our shores, and which, instead of intimidating, only nerved the stronger the right arm



of every true Briton for the contest, and showed him, that he had only to rely upon the Almighty and justice of his cause, in the approaching struggle, and that all the professions of friendship of the Americans, were but idle tales, which their every act has shown, and were only held out to lull us into security.

On Tuesday afternoon, the steamer Coburg kept up a fire upon the Mill and surrounding buildings, doing no material damage, two of her shots passed through the roof of the Mill as was plainly visible from the splinters that flew in every direction. The rebels and Pirates, dressed in the regular Yankee garb, with their long tailed surtouts and cloaks, with a rifle in their hands, were seen running from one building to another in great confusion,—they did not show much play with their cannon [three in number] as they appeared actually afraid to expose themselves in loading and firing, so well directed were most of our shots. They occasionally fired from a nine pounder, but without any effect—their balls, in no case but one, coming within 60 yards of the boat.

A small boat with five American Patriots on board, attempted to cross from the Mill to the other shore, about 4 P M, the Cobourg, however, gave chase and intercepted them, within about a half a mile of the land of Liberty; the fellows worked hard to escape, they knew their lives were at stake, and that they had embarked in a mad enterprise; upon receiving a few volleys from our musketry, they cried for quarters, and were taken on board and pinioned. They were all young men, living in the State of New York, well dressed and abundantly supplied with rifles, pistols, ball cartridge, &c in the pocket of one of them was found a book containing a list of the Patriots, and a requisition for further men and arms, and a report of their proceedings up to that date.

The Cobourg and another Steamer arrived on Wednesday morning bringing down the greater part of the 83d Regt under the command of Colonel Dundas, together with several pieces of Ordnance the largest of which were only twelve pounders, although expresses had been sent up to Kingston stating that heavy cannon were absolutely requisite to drive the Brigands from their strong hold,—after surveying the enemy's position Col Dundas and his officers concluded that nothing could be done effectually, without artillery of greater weight and power, and that an attack under the circumstances was not advisable, thus plainly acknowledging that every thing had been done by the Volunteers and Militia of the District, and adjacent Townships, that could be done [by Regular Troops. What could be said less? where the Town was protected, during the whole of Monday, without a single

cannon on shore not even a six pounder, and where we had not a piece of mounted Ordnance, until the arrival of the 83d on Friday the sixteenth—while during that week, the Americans were within a mile and a half of us, with three effective field pieces, and every necessary implement of warfare.

Reinforcements were expected from Kingston on Thursday, with heavy ordnance, but owing to unavoidable delay in procuring proper carriages they did not arrive until (Friday) at half past 12. Every one was anxiously looking out for their arrival, when three steamers hove in sight, which proved to be the William IV. Brockville and Cobourg, having on board the 83d regiment, & a detachment of the Royal Artillery, with three twenty four pounders. The force landed about 1 o'clock, and about three proceeded to the rising ground in rear of the Mill, while the steamers Queen, Experiment and Cobourg, with two gun-boats, took up their position in front of the enemy, some of them coming within rifle shot.

The 83, with the heavy cannon advanced upon the Brigands from the rear, opening a heavy fire upon the stone buildings, which proved effectual, and drove them all into the Mill, at the same time the steamers falling a little below, out of the range of two twenty four pounders, kept up a well directed fire upon the *Bands of Patriots*. Within one half hour after the firing commenced in earnest, A white flag was seen to wave from the Mill, which however was not attended to by our Forces, as every one was too much exasperated, to show any favour to a Band of Murderers, who had taken forcible possession of a portion of our Territory and put to death many of our inhabitants, indeed had it not been for the influence of the 83d Regiment, as the Polish Von Shoultz says in a letter written by him a short time before his death, very few would have escaped on Friday evening. It was about dusk when the Americans in the Mill marched out and surrendered at discretion, several others including the Polish General were found concealed in the bushes near the bank of the river, and dragged from their hiding places; the prisoners were generally treated well, with only one or two exceptions such things however will unavoidably occur upon similar occasions when every mind is excited and burning with revenge, and it is fortunate for the misguided men that a single one was left to tell the tale. Previous to the surrender, however, the British had fired every building adjacent to the Mill, in order to concentrate their whole attack at once upon the enemy's main fortress, the flames raging in the gloom of night, showing at a great distance the position of the combatants, and shedding a lurid

fight upon all around, had an effect at once awful and sublime.

The number of prisoners taken at the surrender was as near as we can ascertain, 110, in addition to which about 30 were apprehended subsequently to the battle on Tuesday, some on the field, and others skulking about in the woods in the vicinity of this town, some eight or ten more were secured Saturday. The prisoners are mostly American citizens, and were generally well armed, being provided with a rifle, a brace of pistols, a bowie knife, and abundance of ammunition; some of their weapons were of the most costly description. One of the prisoners captured, stated that the Pirates were supplied by different Societies in the United States, the principal one of which, was in the City of New York, with money, clothing, arms, and every thing required for the invasion of Canada, &c. were promised an ample remuneration should they succeed in their *laudable* enterprize—the most valuable farms in our country were to be distributed among those who remained true to the Republican cause.

In the Mill were found several hundred kegs of powder, a large quantity of musket cartridges, swords, pistols, and 200 stand of arms, besides a full supply of provisions, including several barrels of flour with the American brand. We were shown a sword belonging to the General, of fine workmanship the scabbard was silver plated, with an eagle and other carved work upon the outside, and the blade of fine metal, well formed; several other swords and dirks, silver mounted, have been taken, as also a great many braces of valuable pistols. A flag composed of the finest texture, was also taken, wrought no doubt by the truly patriotic ladies of the Union, the cost of which could not have been less than £25; on the flag was exhibited a full spread eagle, beautifully executed, with one star above, and the words, wrought in silk, *Liberated by the Onondaga Hunters*. This flag never was unfurled, as the chivalrous adventurers appeared after the first onset to doubt the success of their expedition.

Among the many found dead, was a young officer of the name of Brown son of General Brown; two other officers whose names are not known, in the pockets of one of them were found documents containing a list of proscribed persons in Prescott, who were to suffer death, men women, and children.

The Militia engaged on Tuesday under the command of Colonel R. D. Fraser, have their Country's warmest thanks for their steadiness and gallantry, in repulsing the enemy. Their exertions have been crowned with success in the defeat of the Brigands, and their retreat into the Windmill with

a number of killed and wounded, and many prisoners. Where all have behaved nobly, it is unnecessary to hold up particular instances of merit in Corps, or Individuals.—Colonel Fraser has expressed in the strongest manner his admiration of the gallantry of a Party of Marines under Lieut. Parker, a part of the Glengarry Highlanders, under Capt. George McDonnell and a Detachment of the Dundas Militia under Major Duncan Clark, who took up their position in the ploughed field, and by whom the brunt of the action was sustained, and whose loss has been severe. The Colonel has also noticed the good conduct and bravery of Captain J. Doran of the Dundas Militia, and two companies of the 1st Regt. of Grenville Militia, under Captains Dunham Jones, and Simon B. Fraser, also the courage of Major McQueen, who volunteered his services on the occasion. The advanced guard which consisted of a few brave Volunteers under Capt D McQueen and Lieut E. G. Denaut, together with Volunteer Milo McArgar, who drove in the enemies picquets, with the loss of the most of them being either taken or killed, merits particular notice. Lieutenants Loucks and Farlow of Major Clark's Division, behaved like Britons, the latter was severely wounded.

The loss of the Brigands is not certainly known; but can not be less than 40 killed & a great number wounded. Saturday 10 of their men were found lying near the Mill & buried in one grave.

Too much credit cannot be given to the people, for their readiness to arise in defence of their country. On Thursday we had men from Cornwall.—Beverly, Mountain, Komptville, Edwardsburgh, and different parts of the country, amounting to 3000, all anxious to defend the British Government; in fact, arms could not be obtained for one half; this may teach the rebels a salutary lesson, and convince them that Upper Canada is not to be invaded with impunity.

The official account of the killed and wounded as contained in the Returns of Colonel Young Commandant at this station, gives the following number, to wit, 2 officers killed, & 11 rank & file, four officers wounded, and 63 rank & file. This return has proved in some respects incorrect. The account as given to us from an authentic source is as follows, in the 83 Regt. one killed, (Lieut. Johnson) and four wounded, —Royal Marines 1 officer and 14 men wounded 2 since dead, —Glengarry Highlanders, one Officer wounded and 7 men, four men killed, —9th Provincial Battalion, one Officer and two men slightly wounded—2nd Regt Dundas Militia, 2 killed and 7 wounded, —1st Regt. Grenville Militia, 2 killed and four wounded, —2nd Regt. one Officer killed, and four men wounded, —Capt, Edmondson's company, one man killed &

3 wounded.—Capt. Jessup's company, five wounded. Gentlemen Volunteers 2 wounded, making in all, 2 officers killed & 11 men,—four officers wounded and 52 men.

The force of the enemy cannot be exactly ascertained, it is variously estimated at from 180 to 300 men, there is no doubt 250 were engaged in the Battle on Tuesday,—our Force on that day might have been 400, but not more than one half were actually engaged, and the Brigands entrenched as they were behind buildings and stone fences, having three field pieces, had the advantage of at least 5 to 1. There is no doubt at least 1000 would have crossed from Ogdensburg, had the "Patriots" succeeded on Tuesday, and instead of the glorious Union Jack, we should have had the 'Stars' (indicative of the number of States in the Union) & the 'Stripes', representing the lashes inflicted upon millions of poor Africans groaning under the oppression of the American Government, floating upon Fort Wellington.

Of the Pirates who have all been tried with the exception of a few who were in the Hospital at Kingston, and all of whom but two, have been found guilty, ten only have been executed,—three discharged, and the remainder are still in custody, and will doubtless be sent to some distant British Colony for life.—Not content with the failure of their expedition here a similar attempt was made some time after at Windsor, near Sandwich by the Pirates when they were again defeated. Between 20 and 30 prisoners were taken, two or three have since been executed, and of those who escaped to the woods, some have since been found frozen to death.

We cannot conclude without noticing the bravery of Sergeant Landers now Sergeant Major of the 1st Grenville Militia. This man on the morning of the battle hurried forward to defend his Country, and being at the time permanently joined to no particular Corps, fell in with Capt McDonell's detachment of Glengarrys, and with them stood the hottest fire of the enemy.

So eager was he to come in contact with the Pirates, that he rashly ran forward ahead of our men, jumped over the stone wall, and was immediately surrounded by the enemy, without any one man who could render him assistance; several shots were aimed at him which missed, one man in particular levelled his piece at him when but a few yards distant, fortunately the ball passed by, just then Landers shot him on the spot,—another a comrade of the former, made a rush upon him, when Landers, being out of ammunition seizing his musket by the muzzle, gave his opponent a blow across the head with the breech, which laid him on the ground, at this moment, another of the Brigands coming up behind, gave him a tremendous blow that left him nearly senseless, after which he was beaten over the head with their guns, stabbed in the underjaw with a bayonet or bowie knife, and left for dead,—in this state he remained until after dark, when finding himself weak from the loss of blood, he managed to crawl on his hands and knees to the stone house of Mr. Snyder, and secreted himself in the garret in a dark corner among some straw, here he remained without sustenance until the following day (Wednesday) during which time he could hear the conversation of the Brigands, who were occasionally in and out below, and two or three of whom came to the place where he was, without discovering him :—At five o'clock, he summoned all his strength, and made an effort to escape to our men, a part of whom were stationed at the house of Mr Bass, he had not proceeded more than 100 yards, when several rifles were fired at him from the mill, some of the balls tore up the ground near his feet, upon coming near our position, the sentries supposing him to be one of the Rebels, fired several shots none of which took effect, one of our Dragoons riding up discovered he was one of our own men, and so disfigured that he could scarcely be known, he was taken to the Hospital, & by careful treatment has since nearly recovered.

